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CIA's Deputy Assures Senators He Does Not Favor Spying in U.S.

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CIA Deputy Director Bobby Inman reportedly assured the Senate Intelligence Committee at a closed session yesterday that "the job of the CIA is abroad."

The admiral, an intelligence professional appointed to the CIA's No. 2 post last month, briefed the senators after disclosures about a draft executive order that would authorize the agency to spy on American citizens and conduct covert operations in this country.

According to Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.), Inman told the committee he did not favor such sweeping changes.

Inman described the leaked document as a "third-level working-staff paper," Moynihan told reporters. Inman also promised the committee that any final proposal for changes in rules governing U.S. intelligence agencies will be sent to the committee for its advice before President Reagan is asked to sign it.

"He [Inman] made clear his judgment, and I share it firmly, that the job of the CIA is abroad," Moynihan said. "The CIA has no business involving itself in domestic operations, much less those directed against American citizens."

The CIA has been prohibited by law since inception from assuming any "internal security functions," but disclosure of extensive domestic spy work and other abuses in the mid-1970s led to President Carter's 1978 executive order prescribing detailed restrictions on intelligence activities involving American citizens and corporations.

The Carter order is being revised as the result of a White House meeting in late January at which Reagan and White House counselor Edwin Meese III reportedly expressed concern about the ability of U.S. intelligence to cope with the dangers of terrorism.

The first draft, by an interagency working group, would abandon the

Carter administration standard of intelligence-gathering by "the least intrusive means possible" and eliminate the attorney general's veto power over operations involving surreptitious break-ins and other controversial techniques.

The draft also would permit the CIA to infiltrate and influence activities of domestic organizations with foreign connections.

In a 10-page analysis of the order, Jerry Berman, legislative counsel of the American Civil Liberties Union, said the draft would allow resurrection of such activities as Operation Chaos. In that, the CIA collected files on about 300,000 individuals and organizations in pursuit of suspicions about the antiwar movement.

The draft order, "if promulgated in anywhere near its current form, would seriously jeopardize the civil liberties of law-abiding citizens, political organizations and business entities," Berman warned.

Calling some of the suggested changes "off the wall," Moynihan said he would be more concerned if he thought either CIA Director William J. Casey or Inman favored them. Moynihan said he has seen no sign of that.

"I would be against any change" that reactivates the CIA as an internal agency of government, dealing with American citizens in this country, Moynihan said. "And I hope the president would be."

The draft also has drawn fire from Rep. Don Edwards (D-Calif.), chairman of the House Judiciary subcommittee in charge of the FBI, and muted criticism from some FBI sources who feel it constitutes unwarranted criticism of the way the bureau has been dealing with the threat of terrorism.

According to several sources, the changes that explicitly put the CIA back into domestic spying and that sanction covert operations have been put on the back burner by all the publicity. The same sources suggested that downgrading the attorney general's role is still alive.

Under the Carter administration order, the attorney general must review all intrusive activities against U.S. persons to ascertain a probable cause to believe the target is an agent of a foreign power and that "the least intrusive means possible" are being employed.

The draft order would allow heads of intelligence agencies to employ controversial techniques, such as break-ins, under much more permissive standards. According to Berman, the proposal "all but abolishes the Justice Department review function."

"Thus, the draft order would allow an agency like the CIA to operate more extensively in the United States... under rules of its own devising," he protested.

One source said the proposed executive order is actually in its third draft form now, in contrast to the first draft that became public. It is expected to be ready for discussions with the Senate and House Intelligence committees about the end of the month.